

Monday, February 27th, 2023  
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Resource Generation, CT

In Support of:

House Bill 5673: AN ACT CONCERNING THE REFORMATION OF CERTAIN  
TAXES AND TAX EQUITY.

Good afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Horn, and the distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee:

My name is ila duncan and I live in Wilton.

I'm a member of the Connecticut chapter of Resource Generation. We organize young people with wealth and class privilege to equitably redistribute land, wealth and power. We belong to Recovery For All – a statewide coalition fighting for a better future for Connecticut, bringing together more than 60 community, faith, and labor organizations.

**I am testifying in strong support of House Bill 5673: An Act Concerning The Reformation Of Certain Taxes And Tax Equity.** As the wealthiest state in the country, Connecticut should be a shining example for the nation where every family has what we need to live a good life. But instead we have a state where hundreds of thousands of working people are struggling to raise families, while a handful of wealthy corporations and wealthy residents are getting even wealthier. The scale of this crisis demands a bold response—people are suffering and our state has a responsibility, and has the resources to enact policies that provide for Connecticut families.

I'm here as one of the “wealthy few” who theoretically benefits from Connecticut’s regressive tax structure. I would argue that a deeply inequitable society that cares for the few at the expense of the many benefits no-one.

As a child growing up in Fairfield County, I always had a roof over my head, food on the table, healthcare when I was sick and more; my parents were always able to meet and often surpass my basic, material needs. In my sheltered experience, I assumed that was the case for children and young people across the entire state.

Learning otherwise was crushing and even after years of learning and working to use my privilege to build a more just world, I still constantly question myself. Family wealth has allowed me physical comforts, sure, but how can it bring peace of mind when those I care about are struggling? Even physical comforts feel unstable when our government prioritizes the concept of economic growth over human lives.

Former Resource Generation staff member Iris Brilliant describes some of these feelings as part of the “vicious cycle of wealth accumulation.” Having wealth allows me to use money to solve my problems, which means I am less likely to seek out community support, which isolates me, making me feel like money is the only way to solve my problems and therefore I need to hold

onto it for myself. I see the damage from this cycle in myself, my family and my organizing, breeding loneliness, fear, and self-doubt in wealthy folks.

I work to break this cycle by personally redistributing the wealth I have access to to organizations fighting to build the kind of state I want to live in, many of whom are fellow Recovery For All members. But philanthropy is an opaque system with no accountability to the public. I would much rather pay that money in taxes.

My child self's vision may not be the reality in CT, but I believe it can be our future. The state has the resources to fund a robust public sector that unconditionally meets all residents' needs, we just need to redistribute those resources. The reforms proposed in HB 5673 are a start to getting us there.

Last year's tax incidence report showed that the wealthiest residents pay a mere 6% of their annual income in state and local taxes while working people contribute more than 25%. My family pays amounts of taxes that sound big, but in relation to what we have these taxes have little to no effect on our lifestyle. I think this perspective is important to remember when we talk about taxing the wealthy.

People in this state have amounts of money that are impossible to comprehend. When you hear that someone pays hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes it sounds huge and dramatic. But we have to remember that even if a billionaire's tax bill has a lot of zeroes, their losses are primarily on paper. A few more percentage points in tax will not put billionaires or my family at risk of hunger, losing housing or access to health care, but that money can go a long way towards supporting those who are already facing those struggles. And for me and my peers, healthy, equitable policy that cares for our state's most valuable members is far more appealing than economic policy that allows or even encourages the wealthy to perpetuate that cycle of wealth accumulation to hoard more and more wealth.

**These aren't "broad based" tax increases. These are narrowly focused proposals to restore fairness to the tax code, fund essential services, and jumpstart economic recovery.**

We have an unprecedented opportunity – and the resources – to create a state where everyone has good healthcare to lead healthy lives, high quality childcare and schools for their kids, a good job to support their families, and a safe place to call home. Things that I took for granted as a child. **I urge the Committee to have the courage to make the right choice and pass House Bill 5673: An Act Concerning The Reformation Of Certain Taxes And Tax Equity.**

Thank you,  
ila duncan  
Wilton, CT